

COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON & STEELHEAD RECREATIONAL ANGLERS BOARD

March 1st, 2018

Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board Conference Room

1200 Chesterly Drive, Suite 280

Yakima, WA 98902

MEETING MINUTES

WDFW ATTENDEES: Chris Donley (Region 1), Chad Jackson (CRSSRAB Coordinator) and Capt. Mike Jewell (Region 2), John Easterbrooks and Paul Hoffarth (Region 3), Bryce Glaser (Region 5), and Eric Fiedler (HQ)

CRSSRAB ATTENDEES: Ed Wickersham (Chair), Larry Hill (Vice Chair), Steve Martin, Bill Bowles, Dennis Beich, Dan Davies, Kevin van Bueren, Curtis King, Rick Graser, Tom Fritsch, and Stan Bartle

1.) The meeting officially started at 0905 on March 1st, 2018:

- a. Both WDFW and CRSSRAB (Board) members introduced themselves and provided brief biographies. New WDFW staff include Chad Jackson, Bryce Glaser, and Paul Hoffarth. New Board members include Kevin Van Bueren, Rick Graser, and Dennis Beich. Kevin van Bueren will replace Dan Davies as an official Board member during the August 2018 meeting. Kevin attended this meeting to learn about the Board's purpose, project proposals, and the project approval process.
- b. WDFW staff informed the Board about the new Columbia River Management Unit (CRMU). Columbia River fisheries management historically was managed by the Director's Office out of Region 5. Retirements of Guy Norman (Region 5 Director), Ron Roller (Columbia River Fishery Manager), and few other staff allowed WDFW to structure Columbia River fishery management differently and fill the vacancies with new people. Columbia River fishery management is now managed by the Fish Program out of headquarters by Ron Warren (Assistant Director Fish Program). Bill Tweit leads the CRMU and Ryan Lothrop is the new Columbia River Fishery Manager.
 - i. The Board requested that WDFW provide them with an organization chart for the CRMU (Action Item #1).

2.) Future CRSSRAB Meetings:

- a. The WDFW and Board unanimously agreed that semi-annual meetings are adequate to complete CRSSE business, so long as either party can call an ad hoc meeting if necessary. Ad hoc meetings, depending upon whether requested by the WDFW or Board, need to be coordinated through Chad Jackson or Ed Wickersham,

respectively. Chad and Ed will then coordinate together to schedule an ad hoc meeting.

- b. Semi-annual meetings will be held in February and August of each calendar year per the process manual and bylaws. Semi-annual meeting specifics include:
 - i. The February meeting will be in person and held on the last Monday and Tuesday of the month. Meetings will be continually held at the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board office in Yakima.
 - ii. The August meeting will be via conference call and held on the second Wednesday of the month.
 - iii. The WDFW will schedule February and August meetings through 2020 and send those dates to WDFW staff and Board members via email (Action Item #2).

3.) CRSSE Enforcement Staff Activity Report:

- a. This agenda topic was moved up to accommodate Capt. Mike Jewell's availability.
- b. Capt. Mike Jewell provided an update on enforcement activities related to salmon and steelhead fisheries in regions 1, 2, 3, and 5. These salmon and steelhead fisheries are enforced using CRSSE funds. Capt. Jewell provided WDFW staff and Board members a handout summarizing total angler contacts, infractions issued, and hours worked.
- c. Board members had the following questions and comment for Capt. Jewell. Capt. Jewell and/or Fish Program staff present provided responses to the Board.
 - i. **Q:** The Board was curious/concerned whether a lack of funds for Enforcement Program every resulted in fisheries being restricted/constrained? An example cited was the alternating boundary openings for the Snake River spring chinook fishery and belief that season structure was driven by Enforcement Program staffing issues. **A:** Capt. Jewell said there has not been a situation where a lack of funding for enforcement activities has every restricted/constrained a fishery. Capt. Jewell said when necessary Enforcement Program will pull staff from other regions to help enforce a fishery. Chris Donley responded to the Snake River fishery example and explained the alternating openings were related to creel surveying logistics and not Enforcement Program staffing issues.
 - ii. **Q:** The Board wanted to know why enforcement activities continue even if certain fisheries are no open. **A:** Capt. Jewel explained that even if fisheries are closed, enforcement still needs to monitor compliance by anglers and is a requirement of most/all NOAA permits that authorize these fisheries under ESA.
 - iii. **Comment:** The Board wanted to have further communication with Enforcement Program to discuss funding for patrols. **Response:**

Enforcement Program is more than willing to meet with the Board on CRSSE funding of enforcement activities.

4.) CRSSE Funding and Budget:

- a. CRSSE Funding Cycle-Chad Jackson explained to new Board member that the CRSSE funding cycle goes from May through April (e.g., May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018). This funding cycle doesn't quite align with State fiscal years (July-June).
- b. Fish Program Project Spending to Date-Eric Fielder from Fish Program Financial Services in HQ presented the CRSSE budget status to the Board. The regional fish program managers provided additional information where appropriate. For the 2017-2019 biennium, the Board approved ~\$2.98 million in CRSSE spending. Breaking that total out, ~\$1.67 million for Fish Program, ~\$641K for Enforcement Program, and ~\$666K for Business Services Program (aka indirect). Based off the most recent expenditures report, the Fish Program will be returning ~\$600K to the CRSSE account. This amount may reduce slightly due to spending that will occur in March and April.
- c. 2018 Project Renewals-The total funding request for CRSSE funding cycle 2018-2019 is ~\$1.62 million. Enforcement program is already through funded by CRSSE through June 2019 via the Washington state biennial schedule. Funding for Business Services Program has already been allotted.
- d. Budget Forecast-Between the remaining spending authority (~\$900K) and leftover funds (~\$600K), there is a total of ~\$1.51 million left to fund Fish Program renewal proposals. Fish Program needs to reduce their request by a little over \$100K so the funding request equals the total available funding (Action Item #3).
- e. Open Discussion-The above four agenda items led to an open discussion of WDFW's budgeting process, how indirect rate is applied to CRSSE funds, concerns related to the CRSSE fund balance, and budget requests from the Board. Below is a summary of the open discussion.
 - i. **Q:** The Board wanted to know when Proportionate Admin Funding (PAF; aka indirect) applied to CRSSE funds and are there situations where CRSSE funds could be "double tapped" by PAF? **A:** PAF (~16% ± some percentage points) is applied to CRSSE funds immediately after the biennial spending authority has been identified. CRSSE funds can be and likely have been "double tapped" by PAF. This only occurs when there are leftover funds that are carried over into the next biennium's spending authority.
 - ii. **Concern:** WDFW staff alerted Board members that sometime in the next 2-4 years the CRSSE spending authority will equal its revenues. This will happen because the unspent funds from the initial years of CRSSE (when there were fewer projects being funded and less being spent) were carried over into the spending authorities for later years, awarded to various projects, and fully spent. When spending authority equals revenues, the WDFW/Board will

need to reduce and further prioritize Fish and Enforcement program project spending.

- iii. **Recommendation:** The Board briefly discussed the possibility of purposely saving 3-5% of the biennial spending authority to serve as a buffer for unforeseen expenditures and/or to potentially fund ad hoc project proposals. This idea will be further discussed between the WDFW/Board.
- iv. **Request:** At the end of this agenda topic, the Board requested WDFW provide a copy of Eric's CRSSE budget spreadsheet (Action Item #4), determine whether or how much PAF "double tapping" of CRSSE fund has occurred and draft a report for the Board (Action Item #5), and provide quarterly CRSSE budget updates in January (Q1), May (Q2), July (Q3), and November (Q5) (Action Item #6). Eric indicated it is best if quarterly budget updates are submitted on the 20th of each month in order to include the all expenditures from the previous month. For quarterly reports, the Board requested a simple yet concise format. Chad and Eric will develop a budget summary template for the Board to review, comment, and approve (Action Item #7). The Board also wanted to make sure that WDFW submits Q1 and Q3 reports at least two weeks before the February and August meetings, respectively.

5.) Status Report of Currently Approved Projects:

- a. Copies of the project status reports were not made available to the Board prior to the meeting due to staff time limitations. Chad said status reports will be sent to the Board ASAP after this meeting. Provided below is a summary of each CRSSE project given by the responsible regional fish program manager.
- b. Region 1 (Chris Donley):
 - i. **Snake River Creel Survey**-Spring chinook fisheries were poor due to abnormal run timing that resulted in higher than normal sea lion predation. Terminal area harvest was very low. A- and B-run steelhead seasons were greatly reduced in the lower Columbia and Snake rivers. Once steelhead returns to the Snake River could be better assessed later in the year, seasons were returned to full/normal daily limits in most areas. There was full and typical fall chinook fishery in the Snake River. Reduced fisheries this year in the Snake River resulted in CRSSE fund savings because full monitoring was not necessary.
- c. Region 2 (Chad Jackson):
 - i. **Upper Columbia River (UCR) Creel Surveys**-Salmon fisheries in the UCR were greatly reduced due to poor returns. The spring chinook season in the Icicle River was cut in half. Sockeye fishing did not open in Lake Wenatchee and mainstem/tributary fisheries closed after one week via emergency regulation. Only summer chinook fishing was open in the mainstem and

tributaries. Fishing for summer chinook was fair to good depending on the month. Summer steelhead fishing in the UCR was not opened for a second straight year. The result of reduced fisheries resulted in CRSSE fund savings because full monitoring was not necessary.

- ii. **UCR ESA Biologist**-CRSSE funds salaries and benefits of a UCR ESA biologist. All salmon and steelhead fisheries in the UCR required permitting under ESA by NOAA. Without ESA permit coverage, WDFW could not open UCR salmon and steelhead fisheries at all. This position ensures WDFW remains in compliance with our ESA permits, submits annual reports to NOAA, and authors/obtains new permits to open new salmon and steelhead fisheries.
- iii. **Methow Spring Chinook Fishery**-This project is a placeholder in the event WDFW is able to open the Methow River to spring chinook fishing. The WDFW is currently waiting for an ESA permit from NOAA. No CRSSE funds were spend on this project.
- iv. **Real-Time PIT Based Escapement Estimates**-This project takes advantage of existing PIT arrays in the UCR tributaries to estimate summer steelhead escapement in real-time. This tool will help managers determine if abundances are adequate to open fisheries both in time and area. This project is nearly complete with beta testing set to occur later in 2018.

d. Region 3 (John Easterbrooks):

- i. **Yakima River Spring Chinook Fishery**-Lower than expected returns. Only ~750 adults harvested. CRRSE fund savings due to reduced fishery monitoring required.
- ii. **Hanford Reach Steelhead Fishery**-Reduced season due to low returns and actions taken Columbia River wide to conserve A- and B-run steelhead.
- iii. **Hanford Reach Summer Chinook/Sockeye Fishery**-Fishery monitoring of a relatively new and recently more productive fishery for summer chinook and sockeye. Sockeye season closed one week after opening due to poor returns. Anglers harvested ~800 sockeye and few chinook.
- iv. **Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Fishery**-Fish were late arriving in reduced in numbers. Still, anglers harvested ~12,000 adults.
- v. **Ringold Hatchery Straying Study**-Study to determine straying of Ringold Hatchery origin summer steelhead. Tagged fish detections used to determine level of straying. 2017 was the first year of tagged fish returns. Early results indicate these fish do not stray and intermingle with wild-origin fish.

e. Region 5 (Bryce Glaser):

- i. **WDFW/Board Administrative Assistant**-The WDFW staff in this position promoted to a new position. Admin Assistant was not filled. CRSSE funds for this position have been saved.

- ii. **Rotating Tributary Creel**-Rotating creel survey on steelhead fisheries in various tributaries to determine angler effort, harvest, and take of ESA listed stocks. Project is nearly complete.
- iii. **Angler Access Investigations**-Funds to explore new access areas on the lower Columbia River and tributaries. New access areas found and are currently being summarized and recommendation are being made for WDFW/Board.
- iv. **Lower Cowlitz Weirs**-Partial funding from CRSSE to operate weirs in lower Cowlitz River tributaries to remove hatchery-origin summer steelhead so they don't intermingle with spawning wild-origin winter steelhead. Results indicate that straying and impact to wild-origin winter steelhead are very low. The WDFW looking to end this project.
- v. **Cowlitz Hooking Mortality Study**-Ongoing. Several hundred salmon and steelhead tagged. Next step is to analyze data and present results.
- vi. **Columbia River Marked Selective Fishery Creel Monitoring**-Creel survey of mainstem marked selective fishery for summer and fall chinook. Lowest angler effort recorded since creel survey began in 2010. However, 2017 had the highest harvest rate of ~3,500 adults.
- vii. **Cowlitz River Wallace Access Site**-Wallace access site is completed and came in at half of the estimate cost.

6.) Consent Agenda (Review 2018-2019 Project Renewals):

- a. The Board received WDFW project renewals 2+ weeks prior to this meeting to review. Each region indicated whether any significant changes were made to these renewals that warranted discussion.
- b. Region 1 (Chris Donley):
 - i. **Snake River Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
- c. Region 2 (Chad Jackson):
 - i. **UCR Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - ii. **UCR ESA Biologist**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - iii. **Methow River Spring Chinook Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
- d. Region 3 (John Easterbrooks):
 - i. **Yakima River Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - ii. **Hanford Reach Steelhead Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - iii. **Hanford Reach Summer Chinook/Sockeye Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - iv. **Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
- e. Region 5 (Bryce Glaser):

- i. **WDFW/Board Administrative Assistant**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - ii. **Rotating Tributary Creel Survey**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - iii. **Angler Access Investigations**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - iv. **Lower Cowlitz Weirs**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
 - v. **Cowlitz Hooking Mortality Study**-Scope of work is unchanged from past approvals. However, requesting additional funds to cover increased staff costs on the project.
 - vi. **Columbia River Marked Selective Fishery Creel Monitoring**-Proposal is unchanged from past approvals.
- f. After review and discussion of WDFW's renewal proposals, Vice-Chair Larry Hill motioned to approve the consent agenda under the proviso that WDFW will identify budget savings to ensure the funding request equals or is less than the spending authority. Board member Stan Bartle seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda.

The Board discussed the motion. Some Board members wanted to know where the budget savings would come from and whether fisheries would be constrained as a result. The WDFW explained that savings would come from expected reduced monitoring costs due to expected low returns of salmon and steelhead in 2018-2019. Additional savings would come from projects like the Methow River Creel Survey that is currently not permitted by NOAA and is a placeholder project. The Board was satisfied with WDFW's response. Another Board member expressed concern over using CRSSE funds for certain access site expenses. The Board member wasn't sure these expenditures were consistent with CRSSE charter language. After further discussion the Board agreed CRSSE funds could be used for access site identification and development.

Once discussions concluded, the Board voted on the consent agenda. Chair Ed Wickersham asked Board members to raise their hands if they approve the consent agenda. All Board member raised their hands indicating unanimous approval of the consent agenda.

7.) Next Steps:

- a. Strategic Use of CRSSE Funds-Chris Donley (Region 1) shared his vision of using CRSSE funds in a strategic manner to move away from expensive annual creel surveys on most of our salmon and steelhead fisheries. Chris's vision was to use available and abundant creel data from salmon and steelhead fisheries to develop a creel survey model that would estimate take on ESA listed species. Some additional research (e.g., more hooking mortality studies) and WDFW Science Division staff time need to be funded to complete such a task. If a creel model could be

developed that would free up CRSSE funds for new project proposals (both WDFW and external). The WDFW agreed to develop a conceptual plan of a creel survey model and present it to the Board during the August 2018 meeting (Action Item #8).

- b. Future Coordination Between WDFW and Board-Most of what the Board wanted to discuss here was addressed during budget agenda item. The Board did remind WDFW to exercise good communication with the Board and for certain areas ways to improve.
- c. Other Items-The WDFW and Board discussed ways to improve education and outreach (E/O) for CRSSE and the projects it funds. E/O options identified were diverse. The WDFW agreed to identify E/O options and present them to the Board for review, discussion, and potentially approval (Action Item #9).

Vice-Chair Larry Hill motioned to make the Chair and Vice-Chair positions on the Board two year terms. The justification is that two years is a more realistic amount of time for someone to be truly effective in the Chair/Vice-Chair positions. Additionally, this would reduce the amount of turnover and create greater continuity. Board member Stan Bartle seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to change the term limit of the Chair/Vice-Chair to two year terms. Chair Ed Wickersham will submit a new version of the CRSSRAB bylaws to the WDFW/Board reflecting that change (Action Item #10).

The Board brought up the topic of the CRSSE Administrative Assistant position that is currently vacant due to incumbent taking a different job with WDFW. Funding for this position was approved by the Board as part of the consent agenda. The Board stated this position is vital to responding to Board members and assisting the WDFW Board Coordinator (Chad Jackson). The Board motioned, seconded the motion, and unanimously voted to fill this support position using CRSSE funds. Discussion then ensued about how best to fill this position. Suggestions for filling this position included assigning the work to an area/district fish biologist, a regional front desk staff, or qualified retired WDFW employee. The WDFW and Board leaned towards either a front desk staff or retired employee. The WDFW will identify option for filling this position and share them with the Board (Action item #11).

The Board requested WDFW update the CRSSE/CRSSRAB webpages. The WDFW acknowledged this needs to be completed and already had plans to update the webpages.

The Board inquired about a past external project proposal requesting CRSSE funds to investigate new hatchery culture strategies. Briefly, the proposal would grade out small hatchery salmon/steelhead parr, place them in separate rearing vessels, and increase their growth to preferred smolt size. The WDFW responded by stating that

at the time proposal was submitted there was not Board process to except external project proposals. Furthermore the WDFW provided the sponsor with a technical assessment of the proposal. Briefly, the WDFW felt the proposal had merit, but had difficulties finding a hatchery to conduct the experiment at. Lastly, the WDFW did not believe the proposal aligned with charter language/scope of the CRSSE legislation because it was a hatchery project. The Board requested an email from WDFW (with the technical document attached) to officially close the loop on this issue (Action Item #12) and additionally the WDFW follow up with the project proposal sponsor to officially let this person know the CRSSE will not be funding the project (Action Item #13).

8.) The meeting adjourned at 3:50PM

9.) Summary of Action Items:

#1-The WDFW will email an organization chart for the CRMU (Completed the week of 3/5/18)

#2-The WDFW will schedule semi-annual Board meetings through 2020 (Completed and emailed to the Board the week of 3/5/18)

#3-The WDFW will identify CRSSE budget savings within the 2018-2019 renewal proposals (Completed and emailed to Board in early-June)

#4-The WDFW will email Eric Fiedler's budget summary spreadsheet (Completed and emailed to the Board the week of 3/5/18)

#5-The WDFW will investigate whether or not the CRSSE has been "double tapped" for PAF in the past (Due to the Board by or before the August Board meeting)

#6-The WDFW will submit quarterly budget summaries beginning with Q2 in May (Completed and emailed to the Board 6/1/18)

#7-The WDFW will submit a budget summary template for the Board to review, comment, and approve (No specified due date)

#8-The WDFW will complete a conceptual plan of a creel survey model (Due by or before the August Board meeting)

#9-The WDFW will identify E/O projects/items and email them to the Board for review, comment, and approval (Due by or before the August Board meeting)

#10-Chair Ed Wickersham will submit a revised version of the Board bylaws to reflect the Board's wish to make the Chair/Vice-Chair positions two year terms (Due by or before the August Board meeting)

#11-The WDFW will identify options to fill the CRSSE Admin Assistant position (Due by or before the August Board meeting)

#12-The WDFW will email the Board to close the loop on an external project proposal concerning new hatchery culture strategies (No specified due date)

#13-The WDFW notify the external project sponsor (from #12) that CRSSE funds will not be awarded to conduct work (No specified due date)

#14-Miscellaneous action item identified after the meeting. The WDFW updated the WDFW and Board contacts list and emailed it to the Board the week of 3/5/18.